

King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from February 10, 2005
Issaquah Salmon Hatchery - Issaquah, WA

Commissioners Present: Dick Gradwohl, Nancy Hutto, Grant Davidson, Ben Kodama, Bob Tidball, Michael Blakely, Ewing Stringfellow and George Irwin. **Commissioners Absent:** Gaylia Bullock, Judy Duff, Roger Calhoon and Jason Roetcisoender. **Staff:** Eric Nelson, Claire Dyckman, Steve Evans and Laurie Clinton, King County (KC) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Agriculture Programs; and Brad Gaolach, Director and Sylvia Kantor Washington State University Extension (WSU) KC.

Guest Agency Staff: Seth Starke, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); Autumn Salamack, Evergreen Planning Consultants; KC Council member David Irons; Jeanette McKague, Aide to KC Council member David Irons; Russ Carlsen and Jeff McMorris, Aides to KC Council member Kathy Lambert; and Josh Monaghan, King Conservation District (KCD).

Guests: Rob Holland, Judy Taylor and Anne Mack

Vice-Chair George Irwin called the meeting to order at 4:10pm.

Commission Roundabout:

Grant was on his way to a State Farmer's Market Association conference and was stopping to talk with Governor Gregoire about Senior Citizen and WIC Programs at Farmer's Markets. Michael Blakely shared details of the devastation she experienced on her farm during the recent flooding in the Snoqualmie Valley. They had water in areas that had never previously flooded and lost poultry and structures as a result. She also provided an update on the Poultry Processing Facility. George had recently returned from the National Cattleman's Association annual show in Denver, CO. He reported on the Jan. 20th field trip through the Enumclaw APD that Commissioner's attended along with County staff. He said it was very well planned and he appreciated being able to talk directly with staff members who work on programs that greatly impact agriculture on the plateau. George also felt it was good for those staff members to get out onto farms and learn about farming. Bob told about the meeting with Daryl Grigsby that he attended along with a representative from 1000 Friends of Washington regarding the WLRD Business Plan and the concern they have on its detrimental impact to agriculture by not supporting the KC Ag Program. All Commissioners acknowledged the predicted upcoming drought and the impacts it will have on agriculture. It was also agreed that the Commission would like a representative from KC Roads to come and discuss the raising of 124th in the Snoqualmie Valley in regards to concern over flooding on ag lands.

Commission Business

Commission Staff Report: Laurie gave a review of the itinerary from the field trip George had mentioned and she thanked George for his local and historical facts and stories during the bus ride. She said she had received very positive feedback from staff on how much they learned about farming and how much they appreciated the Ag Commissioners being there to talk with them. Laurie thanked Judy Taylor for her time on the WRIA 9 Steering Committee for the Ag Commission. She reminded the Commission that it is very important to replace Judy T. during this important time as the draft plan is being finalized. Laurie reported that she had checked with Daryl Grigsby and the committee he had mentioned for the Business Plan has not yet been formed.

Staff Report: Eric expressed Judy Herring's thanks to the Commission for their contribution to the revised "Deed of and agreement Relation to Development Rights" and provided copies for everyone.

Agency Reports

WSU Extension King County: Sylvia provided an update on the Food Policy Council and asked that the Commission consider formally endorsing it. Discussion followed and it was decided to have Sylvia provide a presentation at an upcoming meeting so the Commission can learn more about it. She also announced that the Business Planning session of the Cultivating Success small farm training had begun.

King Conservation District: Josh reported on an upcoming training from the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) on the Animal Feeding Operations (AFO)-Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) regulations and gave a brief update on the dairy bio-gas digester project in Enumclaw.

Approval of Minutes

Motion 01-0205 Motion by Bob to approve Jan 13th meeting minutes and Ben seconded. A correction was made to page 2, KC FPP "Revised Development Rights Deed" Presentation, under listed changes Page 3 line – should be "...are allowed to bring agriculture wastes onto their property for compost use". Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Judy Taylor expressed concern on behalf of the Upper Green Preservation Society regarding the WSDOT proposal for a SR164 bypass to SR18 and opening of Academy Drive. She cautioned the Commission that these need to be watched in case they get into the study.

Committee Reports

Ag Program Committee: Steve reported that the Committee worked on four items: the Ag Summit, determining whether or not to hold one in March; looking into Farmer Loan program; for Puget Sound Fresh promotion have a "buy local" day; and consideration of a donation box for tsunami victims at the Small Farm Expo.

Shared Salmon Strategy for Puget Sound – Agriculture Platform Presentation

Autumn Salamack from Evergreen Funding Consultants provided background information on the purpose and goals of the Shared Salmon Strategy for Puget Sound. She explained that the Strategy organization was formed to create a unified response to the federal Endangered Species Act from the Puget Sound region's state, county and city agencies, tribal governments, non-governmental organizations and interested individuals. Autumn's presentation focused on the agriculture component of the plan. The agriculture platform of the Strategy recognizes the good work done by farmers and the tribes toward salmon restoration. This document has just recently been distributed to the agriculture community, tribes and environmentalists for review and input. Three key tools have been identified as being crucial to the success of farming within the parameters of salmon protections: the need to increase and/or improve the "bottom line" for farmers to keep them economically viable; recognize that farming is one of the best active land uses for fish and that preserving farmland is vital to the current and future stability of agriculture; and protecting and restoring fish habitat is achievable through providing more flexibility and funding incentives for farmers who want to engage in salmon recovery actions. The platform strongly promotes the use of incentive programs to accomplish conservation goals and makes the case that it is necessary to have adequate funding sources to ensure success. There was a discussion and the Commission had many question on how the plan would be funded and how other salmon plans or regulations fit into this process, such as the Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) plans and the Critical Areas Ordinance. Autumn explained that funding sources are being explored through grants and the state budget. The Strategy looks at how all regulations, basin plans and salmon recovery plans fit together and meet the needs of salmon recovery and protections. The Shared Strategy's purpose is to develop an overall regional plan by compiling what is in place and identifying areas that are lacking (either geographical areas or parts of a plan) and to ensure there is adequate funding for incentive programs. Autumn responded to the statement about the need for grass roots support and understanding farmers' needs by saying that the common thread throughout this effort has been the call to work at the grass roots level to make sure the plan can be adopted and supported by farmers. The Draft Platform states that the ultimate hope is that farming and fish advocates will work side by side to create a future where protecting salmon is part of a farmer's daily business and supporting farming is a daily concern of fish advocates. Autumn reminded everyone that the Strategy is strictly incentive based and that she welcomes comments from the Commissioners. She said if anyone thinks of more comments or questions after the meeting to please call her or email her. The address for Shared Strategy is www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org George thanked Autumn for coming and informing the Commission about this process.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Corridor Presentation

Seth Starke, WSDOT Transportation planner reported on the current studies underway for State Route (SR) 164 and 167. The studies evaluate safety and congestion issues along the corridors and analyze changes to roadways that include alternative routes. SR164 currently is of greatest interest to the Commission because several of the new routes under study go through Agriculture Production Districts (APD's). Seth had maps and informational handouts on the proposed study routes. He explained the process for selecting changes and extensions to highways. He reviewed the various operational solutions that had been considered for SR164, which included a reversible lane; left turn lanes; and widening in some areas. It is estimated that sixty percent of SR164 traffic is heading to SR167. Seth said that no routes have been approved and all proposed routes are being analyzed. The routes identified on the maps all have feasibility studies done, which include traffic patterns, geological features, and financial impacts. Seth gave the dates for the upcoming Open Houses being held to provide information on the proposed solutions and to get public input. He also explained how these projects are rated for final selection of a specific project. When a corridor change has been analyzed in a WSDOT approved, manner, it then becomes part of the State Transportation Plan. Seth said he would come back when it gets closer to the final report being completed so the Commission could then provide recommendation on the proposal for inclusion to the plan. George expressed the Commission's appreciation for the information and said they will be glad to respond at the appropriate time.

New Business

Discussion was held on changing meeting times and locations. Based on varying schedules and the difficulty in finding another time that worked for everyone, it was decided to keep the meeting time, day and time of month the same.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:10 pm.